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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S

DONATED FOODS FOR DISASTERS

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a guide for
state and
local officials

CONSUMER AND MARKETING SERVICE
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE PA-557



Foreword

This pamphlet is a guide for State and local officials connected with the commodity distribution program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It outlines food distribution responsibilities and courses of possible action during disasters resulting from flood, fire, freeze, earthquake, tornado, hurricane, landslide, explosion, or other causes.

Disaster preparedness is essential. We never know where or when a disaster may strike. Preparedness is the key to well-coordinated and executed food distribution operations.

Distribution of USDA-donated foods nationally is the responsibility of the Consumer and Marketing Service. Responsibility for this function within the States rests with the State director of commodity distribution in the agency designated by the State to administer the commodity distribution program. All persons connected in any way with the program should know who their State commodity director is, how to reach him, and the essentials of his preparedness plan.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture now donates approximately two billion pounds of food annually to 70,000 schools, 6,700 summer camps for children, and 8,000 charitable institutions in 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Trust Territories, and to nearly six million needy persons in family units in almost 2,000 political subdivisions and Indian agencies in 47 States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the Trust Territories. Each of these outlets represents a potential supply of food for emergency and disaster feeding.

Victims of disaster have first priority in the use of USDA-donated foods. Every effort should be made to meet their food needs promptly. No formal declaration of disaster is required—need is the primary factor in making these foods available for disaster feeding.

Preestablished authority makes foods available to the extent needed for the care of persons affected by natural or man-made emergencies or disasters.

The duration of the need for food assistance will be determined by the director of the appropriate Food Distribution Area Office.

The following pages give pertinent details of how USDA-donated foods may be used to assist emergency and disaster victims.

Revised July 1965

U.S. Department of Agriculture's DONATED FOODS FOR DISASTERS

A Guide for State and Local Officials

Authority

Emergency or disaster food distribution authority is contained in regulations issued by the Secretary of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, entitled "Donation of Food Commodities for Use in United States for School Lunch Programs, Training Students in Home Economics, Summer Camps for Children, and *Relief Purposes*, and in State Correctional Institutions for Minors."

Section 503.8(e) "Disaster organizations are eligible to receive commodities under Section 416 (Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended) and Section 32 (Public Law 320, as amended) for distribution to disaster victims. Distribution agencies making distribution to disaster organizations shall immediately advise the Food Distribution Area Office of the Consumer and Marketing Service. Such organizations shall be eligible for the duration of the disaster, as determined by the Department."

Section 503.3(c) "*Disaster Organizations*" means organizations authorized by appropriate Federal or State officials to assist disaster victims."

(d) "*Disaster Victims*" means persons who, because of acts of God or man-made disasters, are in need of food assistance."

Commodity Availability

Food commodities are available from any one or a combination of sources, depending upon the nature and extent (both as to time and area) of the disaster and the kind(s) of programs operating in or near the affected areas.

Possible Sources

USDA-donated foods generally are available from:

- School lunch storerooms
- Institution storerooms
- Needy family distribution depots
- Local warehouses (city or county owned or leased, or commercial warehouses in which space is rented to store USDA-donated commodities)

- State warehouses (either State-owned or leased, or commercial warehouses in which space is rented to store USDA-donated commodities).
- Diversion of foods by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (re-routing carloads of foods in transit, or on order for regular programs in the same or other States).

Any commodity donated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture designated for schools and other eligible outlets (Section 32 or Section 416 commodity) may be used for disaster feeding purposes.

Commodities designated as Section 6 and foods purchased by individual schools with school lunch funds may be used only if other foods are not adequate and available and, when used, must be replaced immediately following the disaster by the using organization through purchase of the same or similar commodities of equal value and quality, or be paid for in cash. This is required by the National School Lunch Program legislation.

Responsible Agency

The Commodity Distribution Division of USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service (through five Food Distribution Area Offices—see p. 4) is responsible for assisting State distributing agencies in their on-the-scene activities.

State distributing agencies and recipient agencies are responsible for arranging in advance for the release of commodities for emergency or disaster purposes, and for arranging with Food Distribution Area Offices for additional supplies and replenishing regular program stocks as needed. State distributing agencies are also responsible for authorizing, executing, and supervising program operations under Phases I, II, III, and IV, described under "Disaster Action."

Preparedness Planning

Adequate planning will provide a course of action needed when disaster strikes.

Every person connected with the distribution and use of USDA-donated foods should be familiar with the function he would be expected to perform during a disaster.

Coordination with local officials in charge of disaster operations is essential. Equally essential, is learning names of your State distributing agencies and determining from them the action to be taken in releasing USDA-donated foods for emergency or disaster use.

A "Statement of Understanding," issued jointly in February 1960 by the American School Food Service Association and the American National Red Cross, exemplifies "Preparedness Planning" in action.

Basic in this statement is recognition of the vital role which school food service personnel will play in carrying out natural disaster re-

sponsibilities, particularly as they relate to mass feeding operations. State school lunch agencies can render an important service by disseminating information and guidance through monthly newsletters and in workshops on the responsibilities and action to be taken by local school administrators and school lunch personnel in emergency situations. Local school lunch personnel are urged to serve as volunteer members of the local Red Cross Chapter's subcommittee on food preparedness.

In your preparedness efforts, an appraisal of your USDA-donated food supplies should be made immediately, and reported to your distributing agency.

Disaster Action

PHASE I—*Immediate Emergency.* This involves mass feeding of evacuees or other persons affected by the disaster for the duration of the emergency. Public school sites are most frequently used as evacuation centers, and their lunchroom facilities for mass feeding operations. Upon proper receipt, Section 32 and 416 commodities may be released to any of the several approved disaster organizations. If such foods will not suffice, disaster organizations may, upon proper receipt, also draw upon food supplies purchased by the school or donated by the Department of Agriculture specifically for school lunch purposes (Section 6 commodities). *If commodities purchased by the school, or Section 6 commodities, are used in the emergency feeding, they must be paid for or replaced as described on page 2.*

PHASE II—*Continuing Emergency.* Commodities which are available for the family distribution program may be made available to properly identified evacuees who are in the process of returning to their homes to reestablish themselves.

PHASE III—*Post-Emergency.* Disaster victims, properly identified as such, may be certified to receive commodities which are available to needy families for a post-emergency period which may continue for 30 to 90 days with the approval of the appropriate Food Distribution area office.

PHASE IV—*Regular Family Distribution.* The disaster may be of such a serious nature as to deprive a large number of families of their livelihood in the affected area for an indefinite period. Such situations may warrant the establishment of a regular family distribution program. If so, these needy persons will be certified to receive USDA-donated foods on the basis of standards of eligibility in effect in the State, which include income and resources criteria. The establishment of such regular or continuing family distribution programs is the responsibility of local government officials, city and/or county, working in close cooperation with the State distributing agency.

In all phases it is necessary for the State distributing agency to obtain proper receipts for all Department-donated foods used, and to follow the required record keeping and accountability procedures.

Reporting

In order that USDA and State officials may be of maximum assistance, and because of the need for informing the public of activities in connection with disaster feeding operations, the USDA requires that the most expeditious means of communication should be used immediately by local officials to report to State distributing agencies any impending disaster and any action in the initial stages of Phase I. Frequent contact is necessary as disaster operations move through each phase. The completion of each phase, and the kinds and quantities of commodities used, should be reported separately to the State distributing agency.

Summary

There cannot be too much emphasis placed on the need for preparedness planning. All persons involved should familiarize themselves with details of such planning and their individual responsibilities. Local personnel should know: (1) the name of their State director of commodity distribution, and how to reach him, (2) the basic essentials of his preparedness plan, (3) the names of the recognized disasters organizations, and, (4) the function each will be expected to perform during a disaster.

For Additional Information

Additional information in regard to operation of the emergency and disaster relief program can be obtained from the following offices which administer it on an area basis:

NORTHEAST

Connecticut	New Hampshire
Delaware	New Jersey
District of Columbia	New York
Maine	Pennsylvania
Maryland	Rhode Island
Massachusetts	Vermont
	West Virginia

} Food Distribution Area Office
Consumer and Marketing Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
346 Broadway
New York, N.Y., 10013
Telephone: REctor 2-8000 Ext. 800
Area Code 212

SOUTHEAST

Alabama	Puerto Rico
Florida	South Carolina
Georgia	Tennessee
Kentucky	Virginia
Mississippi	Virgin Islands
North Carolina	

} Food Distribution Area Office
Consumer and Marketing Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
50 Seventh Street NE.
Atlanta, Ga., 30323
Telephone: 526-5130
526-5131
Area Code 404

MIDWEST

Illinois	Nebraska
Indiana	North Dakota
Iowa	Ohio
Michigan	South Dakota
Minnesota	Wisconsin
Missouri	

} Food Distribution Area Office
Consumer and Marketing Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
536 South Clark Street
Chicago, Ill., 60605
Telephone: 828-6664
828-6665
Area Code 312

SOUTHWEST

Arkansas	New Mexico
Colorado	Oklahoma
Kansas	Texas
Louisiana	

} Food Distribution Area Office
Consumer and Marketing Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
500 South Ervay Street
Dallas, Tex., 75201
Telephone: RIVERSIDE 9-2877,
9-2878
Area Code 214

WESTERN

Alaska	Nevada
American	Oregon
Samoa	Trust Territory
Arizona	of the Pacific
California	Islands
Guam	Utah
Hawaii	Washington
Idaho	Wyoming
Montana	

} Food Distribution Area Office
Consumer and Marketing Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
630 Sansome Street
San Francisco, Calif., 94111
Telephone: 556-4951
Area Code 415

YOUR STATE DISTRIBUTING AGENCY IS:

FOR USE OF STATE DISTRIBUTING AGENCIES
Insert Name, Address and Telephone No.
